

Children's Department.

A Chinaman at a Cake.

The Chinese are clever people. They can do a great many things that we cannot do, with all the civilization which we think so much of. And more than that, the things which we have now learnt to know, they knew all about years and years ago.

They made paper, and they manufactured silk from the cocoon of an insect, and they steered their vessels by the mariner's compass at a time when our ancestors in this far-off British isle were little better than savages. So that though we smile at their yellow faces and their pigtailed and their little slits of eyes, perhaps they are not so far wrong after all when they call us "foreign barbarians."

Their history, too, goes back to more than a thousand years before the Christian era, and in those early ages they followed and almost worshipped (as they still do) a great philosopher called Confucius, so that even in this respect they were in advance of us.

But it is not with Confucius, but with a cake, that we have to do now. A magistrate, or person in high position in China, is called a mandarin. We conceive him to be, and he generally is, a man of dignity, and of grave and solemn aspect. Such was the one of whom we speak, but he was courteous and friendly, and on entering the Englishman's house asked permission, the weather being very hot, to take off his hat. You know to keep the hat on is the mark of respect in China.

After a long conversation the mandarin prepared to depart, first pressing on his friend a small present, some tea, dates and oranges. But it was not exactly what we should call a present, for a gift in that country is always expected to be paid back again in some other way.

So the Englishman sets his wits to work to think what kind of present the mandarin would like. He thought over the matter long and earnestly. Something foreign, something English, something he had never seen be-

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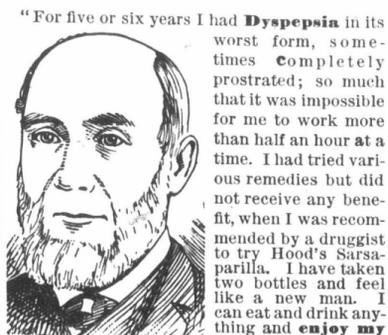
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fore, would surely be most acceptable. Surely a cake would fulfil these requirements.

And the cake was made. It was concocted, so far as was possible, of the same delicious materials which make cakes, as you know, popular at home. It was sent with a card of salutation.

The mandarin happened to be entertaining friends when it arrived. It was a most opportune moment. Both the entertainer and the entertained were delighted with this novel bit of confectionery, utterly unknown to them before.

They attacked it there and then and finished it, the mandarin himself consuming by far the largest portion. Great was the alarm of the messenger who had taken the cake, and who had

witnessed the scene, an alarm shared by his master, to whom, hastening back, he told the news. For if the strange rich food should prove injurious, or it might be fatal, it would be supposed he had been poisoned, and then the cook's head would have paid the penalty, and the lives of all Englishmen in the neighbourhood would have been endangered.

But great was the relief next morning to find that the mandarin had survived, was none the worse, and was only full of praise both of the cake and the cook.

Perhaps your digestion might not be so good as the Chinaman's, so we do not set it before you as an example to be followed. He had never heard the Bible motto, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

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A Clever Escape

An Austrian hunter once discovered an old chamois with her two young ones in a niche at the top of a high rock, in a "kastl," as the hunters call it. The little ones were sporting around their mother, who glanced from time to time down into the valley to watch for any hostile approach. To avoid being seen, our hunter made a great circuit, and so reached a path that led to the "kastl."

Exactly in front of the niche the rock descended perpendicularly to an immense depth. At the back was another steep descent. Some fragments of rock formed a kind of bridge between the larger masses, but these were too high for the little ones to jump upon, and could only be used by their mother.

When the old one caught sight of him, and measured with a glance the unfavourable position of the rocks, she sprang upon the hunter with the fury that maternal love will breathe into the most-timid creatures. The danger of such attacks from the chamois is less from the thrust, which is not very violent, than from the endeavour of the animals to fix the points of their horns, which are bent like fish-hooks, somewhere in the legs of the hunter, and then press him backwards down the precipices. It happens sometimes that the chamois and hunter thus entangled roll into the abyss together.

Our hunter was in no condition to fire at the advancing chamois, as he found both hands necessary to sustain himself on the narrow path; he therefore warded off the blows as well as he could with his feet.

The anguish of the mother increased. She dashed back to her young, coursed round them with loud cries, as if to warn them of danger, and then leaped upon the high fragments of rocks, which formed the only way of escape. She then leaped down again to her little ones, and seemed to encourage them to attempt the leap. In vain the little creatures sprang and wounded their foreheads against the rocks that were too high for them, and in vain

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the mother repeated again and again her firm and graceful leap to show them the way.

The hunter was just preparing to make another effort when the old chamois, fixing her hind legs firmly on the rock behind, stretched her body to its utmost length, and planted her forefeet on the rock above, thus forming a temporary bridge of her back. The little ones seemed in a minute to comprehend the design of their mother, jumped upon her back like cats, and thus reached the point of safety.

All three were off with the speed of the wind: and a couple of shots that he sent after the fugitives merely announced, by their echo to the surrounding rocks, that he had missed his game.